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ABSTRACT

This handbook is provided to serve as a guide for parents and school personnel in establishing and in determining the functions of Title One, ESEA, parent advisory councils. From the very beginning of Title One, the involvement of parents and community representatives in the school program has been recognized as an important element in the ability of schools to influence student motivation and success. The concept of parent involvement in education generally, and in Title One in particular, is strongly advocated by both federal and state officials. This handbook is a useful tool for those who are involved in the planning and implementing of Title One programs throughout a state. It gives clear, simple information about the purpose of Title One and its functions at the school and district levels. It discusses the roles of the Federal Program Director, school principal, and Title One teacher. And it specifies how to go about setting up, carrying out, and evaluating the parent advisory council. (Author)

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# PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

# Information Handbook

## For Title I In Georgia

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# PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

# INFORMATION

# HANDBOOK

# FOR

# TITLE I IN

# GEORGIA

Title I Unit
Office of Instructional Services
Georgia Department of Education
Atlanta, Georgia 30334
1977

## PREFACE

This Parent Advisory Council Information Handbook is provided to serve as a guide for parents and school personnel in establishing and in determining the functions of Title I, ESEA parent advisory councils.

From the very beginning of Title I, the involvement of parents and community representatives in the school program has been recognized as an important element in the ability of schools to influence student motivation and success. The concept of parent involvement in education generally, and in Title I in particular, is strongly advocated by both federal and state officials.

It is our hope that this handbook will become a useful tool for those who are involved in the planning and implementing of Title I programs throughout the state.

Nothing short of an intense, cooperative effort on the part of parents, educators and other interested citizens will produce the bright educational future which all Georgia children so richly deserve.

Table of Contents


| | Page |
|---|---|
| Preface | i |
| Purpose of Title I | 1 |
| Basic Skills | 1 |
| Present Title I Activities and Support Services in Georgia | 1 |
| Components of Title I Programs Instructional Services | 1 |
| Support Services | 2 |
| Eligible Students | 2 |
| Funding Sources | 3 |
| Part A Funds - Neglected and Delinquent | 3 |
| Parent Involvement | 4 |
| District-Wide Function | 5 |
| School-Wide Function | 5 |
| Individual Roles | 6 |
| The Role of the Federal Program Director | 7 |
| The Role of the School Principal | 7 |
| The Role of the Title I Teacher(s) | 7 |
| Parent Advisory Council Organization | 8 |
| Organizing a Parent Advisory Council | 8 |
| Getting Started | 10 |
| Meetings | 10 |
| The Start-up Meeting | 12 |
| Getting Organized as a Team | 13 |
| Moving Ahead | 14 |

| | Page |
|---|---|
| Under Way | 15 |
| Basic Approach | 15 |
| Program Recommendations | 16 |
| Orientation - Training | 16 |
| Ways and Means | 17 |
| Leadership Training for Parent Councils | 20 |
| Training for the District-Wide Parent Advisory Council | 20 |
| Training for the Individual School Parent Advisory Council | 21 |
| Child-Centered Activities | 21 |
| Needs Assessment | 23 |
| Financing Parent Councils | 25 |
| Handling Grievances | 25 |
| Procedures for Conducting a Meeting | 26 |
| Evaluating Parent Councils | 28 |

## PURPOSE OF TITLE I

Title I is the largest federal aid-to-education funding source in our country's history. The funds support projects which help meet the needs of educationally deprived children in schools with relatively large numbers of children from low-income families.

The term "educationally deprived children" refers to those children who have need for special educational assistance in order that their level of educational attainment may be raised to that appropriate for children of their age.

Title I funds must be used by a school district to provide teachers, teacher aides, books, materials or related services over and above those normally provided to all students.

## BASIC SKILLS

Federal laws, rules and regulations require that these funds be concentrated in what are called basic skills areas - reading/language arts and mathematics. These activities are the essential building blocks of a good, solid education.

## PRESENT TITLE I ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT SERVICES IN GEORGIA

Current trends of effective programs include

- programs of early intervention in the lives of children with emphasis on preschool services which provide comprehensive, continuous services through the early years of schooling;
- programs of developmental activities for children which include careful diagnosis of reading deficiencies, and implementation of reading programs based on the best known individualized instructional methods with appropriate materials and well-trained teachers with concentration in elementary grades;
- individualized mathematics programs in the early years which develop computational and reasoning skills.

Each compensatory program has, as its primary component, an educational activity designed to overcome deficiencies in basic learning skills.

## COMPONENTS OF TITLE I PROGRAMS

### Instructional Services

A large portion of Title I money is spent on teacher-related activities. This includes the salaries of extra teachers and

teacher aides. Most teachers employed under Title I utilize specific skills which the regular classroom teacher may or may not have the opportunity to use. Many school districts employ remedial reading or language arts specialists to offer specific skills to Title I children. If these teachers work only with children eligible for Title I services, their salaries may be paid for from Title I.

Thousands of teacher aides now work in urban and rural schools as part of a Title I program. These aides assist Title I teachers in the classroom and work with students individually.

There are other instructional services not directly related to teaching which can be a part of the Title I program. Some services will not cost any money. Other services may require a major expenditure.

The variety of instructional services is endless. Parents should know exactly what instructional services are available to children through their district's Title I program and should work with school officials to decide whether these services help correct the children's learning difficulties.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

Since Title I is an educational program, it has two conditions which must be met before supportive services may be paid for from Title I funds

1. The services are not available from any other source.

2. The services are an integral part of the Title I educational program. For those services to be included as part of a Title I educational program, they must be directly related to an educational need and result in educational improvement.

Only children participating in a Title I educational program may receive supportive services paid for from Title I. Every child in a Title I program will not need supportive services. Such services should be provided on an individual basis and only those children who need extra help should receive it.

When Title I money is spent on supportive services, there is less money to be spent on educational activities.

## ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

Although Title I projects are designed to help students with educational problems, they cannot serve all such children. The law and available funds limit the number of schools and, therefore, the number of youngsters who may be helped.

Schools are eligible for Title I funds on the basis of the

enrollment of students from low-income families, while the children qualify to receive Title I services because of educational deprivation.

If a school district has only one school serving a given grade span, that school is automatically eligible.

In districts with more than one school in a given grade span (for example, three schools with a grade span K-6), a school is eligible if the percentage of low-income children is at least as high as the percentage of such children residing in all schools of this grade span.

If all schools are ranked on a district-wide basis, those having a percentage of low-income children higher than the average for the district are eligible.

A child does not have to be from a low-income family to receive Title I benefits. Once a school qualifies for a project, every student in that school whose basic skills achievement is below grade level is eligible to be served. However, not every child with a basic skills need can be included in a Title I project. Only those having the greatest need will be served. Spreading services among too many children could seriously reduce the impact.

Regulations require that projects be of "sufficient size, scope and quality" to make a great deal of progress toward meeting the needs of the children being served.

## FUNDING SOURCES

In excess of two billion dollars a year is spent for Title I projects throughout the country. Of this amount, Georgia receives in excess of fifty million dollars to provide extra assistance to its students. Each year, Congress appropriates funds for this program out of your tax dollars and returns money to local school districts to carry out projects designed locally to serve the needs of educationally deprived children.

The U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare makes allocations to each state, specifying the amount to be distributed within each county.

## PART A FUNDS - NEGLECTED AND DELINQUENT

There are several different funds within Title I, all of which are subject to the general guidelines mentioned above.

Part A funds, the larger share of Title I, are granted to a large number of school districts on the basis of relative populations of students from low-income families.

Neglected and delinquent (N & D) funds are granted to school districts that provide extra basic skills help to local neglected or delinquent children housed in public or private institutions.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

A new partnership is growing in the schools - a partnership that had its beginning a few years ago. The results should be productive. Parents, teachers and administrators are working hand in hand in a variety of ways toward a number of common goals.

The old "We know best" attitude is fast becoming history. Parents' reluctance to become involved is being replaced with active participation in the education of their children. Youngsters benefit as a result. Federal legislation has stimulated this change in attitude. Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, passed in 1965, called for community involvement in programs for children whose achievement was below grade level. Since 1970, school districts receiving Title I funds have been required to demonstrate that district-wide parent advisory councils are involved in program planning and evaluation. The law, amended in 1974, now requires that advisory councils be formed at schools which provide Title I services.

The recent history of parent advisory councils is a mixed one. There are stories of achieving cooperative and productive relationships between parents and the school staff. There are also tales of indecision, inaction, distrust and struggles for power. It is against this background that the number of parent advisory councils and their level of activity will greatly increase.

School districts, not parents, are mandated by the federal regulations to establish parent advisory councils. They are obligated to support their councils in a number of ways, such as

- providing all information about the project that parent advisory council members need to do their job;
- furnishing support and guidance as needed in council organization and activity;
- coordinating orientation and training in Title I and parent involvement.

For parents, the regulations are an open door through which they may step to form a working advisory partnership with administrative staff and teachers. Their common purpose is to build an educational program which best meets the special needs of educationally deprived children. A Title I parent advisory council, whether at school or district level, provides the opportunity to pursue that goal. To carry out that function, parent advisory council members must know the project well. They must be familiar with its important elements of assessment of student needs, evaluation of project effectiveness, target school selection and project design.

A majority of the voting members of each district parent

advisory council must be parents of children who are being served in the current year's project or who will be served in the next year's program. Parent members must be selected by parents in the attendance areas of the schools served. In many cases, this is accomplished when school parent advisory councils name their representatives to the district council.

## DISTRICT-WIDE FUNCTION

In an advisory capacity only, all parent advisory councils should work with the school system in reviewing and commenting on the Title I grant application.

1. The council advises the school district staff in planning, implementing and evaluating all district Title I projects.

2. The council works with the school district staff to draw upon other community resources in an effort to find solutions to the problems of educationally deprived students.

3. The council advises the school district staff in identifying the needs of the students to be served by Title I programs.

4. The council studies the evaluations of past Title I programs and advises the agencies on the evaluation of the present program.

5. The council listens to any person or group who may want to change the district's Title I program and, based on these comments, may make recommendations for improvement of the program.

## SCHOOL-WIDE FUNCTION

Goals of local school councils are similar to those of district parent advisory councils but are focused on individual school concerns. School parent advisory councils concentrate on problems that can be solved only at the local level. They, too, are expected to be concerned with program design, with the nature and quality of the Title I program and with determining how well their projects meet identified educational needs. To be of maximum value, each council must be aware of the specific needs of the educationally deprived children and make known the special concerns of parents.

Beyond that, councils become involved on a more personal level in the educational program serving their children. Such involvement ranges from promoting parent participation in the classroom as tutors or aides, to encouraging and helping parents work with youngsters at home, to holding discussions on special interest topics. Title I regulations tell you little about what to do or how to do it. Parents in each school should plan their own course, cooperatively, with the principal, the

Title I staff and other school system personnel.

Like district councils, a majority of the school parent advisory council membership must consist of parents of those children served by Title I. Members must be selected by other parents in the school and, in turn, should elect officers and be guided by a set of bylaws.

The underlying purpose for the school parent advisory council is to insure that members know enough about the Title I program to make informed suggestions and recommendations about its operation.

1. The council advises the school administration and staff in identifying the special educational needs of eligible Title I students.

2. The council recommends to the school staff and to the district parent advisory council programs to meet the identified needs.

3. The council makes recommendations about activities which may improve the Title I program at the school.

4. The council advises the school staff regarding the evaluation of the Title I program at the school.

5. The council promotes parent participation in the Title I program at the school.

INDIVIDUAL ROLES

Parents can become personally involved in Title I in many ways. They may

- serve as volunteer tutors in the regular classroom or as volunteer helpers in a Title I learning center;

- visit Title I schools and classrooms to observe the performance of staff and children;

- attend project open houses and parent-teacher conferences;

- find out from the Title I staff how they can assist by working with their child at home;

- attend Title I parent advisory council meetings, express their concerns about the project and suggest how it might be improved;

- attend school board meetings with other Title I parents and give their views on the project to people who make district policy;

- inform other parents and citizens about the purpose, goals and accomplishments of their Title I project.

The role of parents in Title I can probably be stated best as that of community relations.

Community relations involves much more than being on good "speaking terms" with one another. It implies a partnership, joint understanding and responsiveness to needs.

School officials should talk with parents in determining the most important needs of children eligible to receive Title I services.

Parents and other qualified community members may be considered for job openings in the Title I program. Georgia School Laws (Revised 1976 Edition), Section 32-662a states: "(a) All teachers, principals, other certificated professional personnel and all other school personnel of local units of administration shall be employed by local boards of education on the recommendation of the superintendent of schools of the local unit."

The Title I program should include activities and services which involve parents.

Both parents and other interested citizens should be kept informed about the Title I program.

## THE ROLE OF THE FEDERAL PROGRAM DIRECTOR (Title I Coordinator, Supervisor)

The federal program director (Title I coordinator, supervisor) and staff have responsibilities which include cooperating with the parent advisory council in all aspects of the project. This person is required to supply the parent advisory council with copies of the laws, rules, regulations, guidelines, needs assessment, evaluations (both prior and current), applications, periodic progress reports on implementation of the program and appropriate orientation and training materials.

## THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

The educational leader of the school has direct responsibility for the initial establishment and organization of a functioning school parent advisory council. This person should work continuously with the parent advisory council in its efforts to comply with mutual responsibilities.

## THE ROLE OF THE TITLE I TEACHER(S)

The Title I teacher(s) provides the principal with a list of the parents of eligible children and works with the principal in contacting the parents. Teachers and teacher aides may become members of the parent advisory council.

## PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL ORGANIZATION

Like any other organization, the parent advisory council should have an organizational structure. The members themselves should decide the kind and number of officers and committees they need. While many types of organizational structure exists, the parent advisory council may consider the following as a plan.

- chairperson
- assistant or co-chairperson
- recording secretary
- committee chairpersons in such areas as leadership training, parental involvement activities, project activities, and evaluation
- parliamentarian

The council chairperson should not be an employee of the local educational agency.

Some councils may find it necessary to establish subcommittees to become familiar with a single aspect of Title I such as needs assessment or monitoring. In some cases, only council members serve on these subcommittees. In other cases, the subcommittees are chaired by council members but participation is open to other parents.

After members have agreed on some type of structure, they may consider the formulation of bylaws, the tenure and replacement of members, attendance requirements and the frequency and length of meetings. Robert's Rules of Order is a useful source for determining the rules and procedures of the council.

## ORGANIZING A PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Many questions arise in organizing a parent advisory council. How large should it be? What should its membership consist of? How should its members be selected? How many meetings should be held per year? By what rules should the committee operate?

Parent advisory councils may be composed of as few as five or six members or as many as two-or three-hundred members. (Of course, the larger councils are generally broken down into subcommittees, each of which is given a specific job assignment.) The majority of councils range in size from 15 to 45 members. This is small enough to allow the members to work together easily yet is large enough to provide a well-balanced representation of the community.

Title I regulations require that parents of children served by the program make up a majority of the membership. The easiest

way to satisfy this requirement is to restrict initial recruiting efforts to those parents. It might be helpful to note that "Parents of students served . . . . . " is interpreted to include parents of children who are enrolled in the current year's program or who will be served in next year's project. Thus, if students have not yet been selected for the program, it is perfectly legal to start with parents whose children are enrolled currently in a Title I-funded activity.

The following suggestions may provide guidelines for determining what characteristics are desirable for prospective members

1. They should be interested in education.

2. Some members should be community leaders.

3. They should be willing and able to devote the necessary time to the council.

4. They should be capable of getting along with people.

In addition to the desirable characteristics listed above, these hints may be helpful in organizing a representative advisory group

1. Develop new sources. There should be a real attempt made to get "new faces" on the council.

2. Involve community leaders. There should be some attempt to identify community leaders in all the various racial or ethnic communities within the school district.

3. Develop diversity of opinion. Administrators and teachers who may be included should be selected carefully to represent their groups and not to represent an "official" attitude.

The local school district should be very careful in setting up guidelines for the council's composition. Any attempt to control the make up of such a group simply results in a "rubber-stamp" council whose value is diminished in the eyes of the people it is supposed to represent; however, a group who opposes, just for the sake of opposing, seriously impedes the plans for the continued growth of the children.

Generally, the more informal the election process, such as when the procedure is nothing more than a blanket invitation for everyone interested to attend advisory council meetings, the less effective it is.

On the other hand, a parent advisory council is essentially a "grass roots" organization. It should not be forced to adhere to a structure so rigid that it bogs down in bureaucratic red

tape. An advisory council's effectiveness can be destroyed by succumbing to structure

## GETTING STARTED

There are at least two people in every Title I school who should be intensely interested in the formation of a building-based Title I parent advisory council -- the principal and the Title I teacher. The district's Title I coordinator and the federal programs coordinator (the same person in many districts) also have a strong interest in seeing that school parent advisory councils are organized, because no parent advisory council means no Title I grant. Additionally, the district parent advisory council, particularly those members from your own school, should be consulted for continuing help. You can expect as much assistance as you need from all of the above mentioned personnel to get your parent advisory council organized.

What should you ask for? A place to hold your start-up meeting; a list of names, addresses and phone numbers of parents whose children are participating in Title I activities; help in preparing and mailing meeting notices; and staff presentations at the start-up meeting, including descriptions or demonstrations of program activities. If it has not already been done, ask that a specific staff person be named as an ex-officio parent advisory council member and for liaison. The list will get longer after your parent advisory council is organized. But, for now, your immediate need is for help in getting potential members together and to present the case for Title I and parent involvement in such a way that those potential members become active ones.

## MEETINGS

For any organization's meetings to be successful, they must be carefully planned and conducted. This is especially true of your parent advisory council. There are a number of things that can be done in advance to help your meetings satisfy your group's objectives.

1. Develop an agenda for each meeting, specifying in clear terms the major points to be discussed. Never hold a meeting just for the sake of meeting.

2. Parents are more likely to attend meetings if the announced topics are of interest to them. Keep this in mind when setting up your agenda.

3. If your group regularly meets during the day, consider holding occasional evening meetings so that working parents can attend.

The frequency of parent advisory council meetings will depend on each group's level of interest and involvement. The minimum number of meetings needed to carry out the required tasks described earlier is four. Such a schedule, however, allows for neither in-depth study of your program nor continuity from one meeting to another. Many parent advisory councils hold monthly meetings which is certainly satisfactory as long as each meeting has a purpose.

Regular meetings allow your group to become familiar with the program, to explore areas of particular interest and to make a real contribution to the Title I program. There are exceptional cases of building parent advisory councils which meet more frequently - weekly or bi-weekly - to address a wide range of educational topics. Such a schedule is not necessary to deal with the business of Title I and difficult in the absence of strong staff support in the planning and conducting of meetings.

Many council meetings have both a business session and a program. During the business part, committees report on their actions, staff members review the status of the project and other topics related to the Title I program are addressed. For the program, there may be a speaker, a demonstration or a discussion of some subject not necessarily related to Title I.

Some school parent advisory councils invite all Title I parents to their meetings and find that business is not of great interest to them. By way of a solution, business meetings - usually attended only by parent advisory council members - can be held before the general meeting, which then would consist of the program, discussion and a coffee hour. If this approach is used, care should be taken neither to discourage parents from attending the business meetings nor to exclude them from what, by law, must be open meetings.

In cooperation with the principal, decide when and where your start-up meeting will be held and work out the meeting agenda. Ask the principal to notify all parents of Title I participating children. Experience proves that a mailed notice is more effective than one carried home (sometimes) by students. Then, and this is important, follow up the notice with personal phone calls to each parent on the list. A notice is easy to ignore. You will have better attendance if you make the follow-up calls.

Once a meeting begins, there are a number of steps that can be taken to help things run more smoothly.

1. Meetings should be held at a central location with ample parking. The school, a public hall or a member's home are all possibilities.

2. Offering rides to new members and to parents without

transportation is an important consideration.

3. People should be comfortable and meeting locations should be suited to the activity. Having to sit for two hours in small student desks will almost guarantee a smaller turnout for the next meeting.

4. If meetings begin on time, members will be inclined to be on time.

5. Using name tags, particularly at the first meetings of the year, helps parents and staff get acquainted. Introductions also help break the ice and make people feel a part of the group.

6. Explaining the procedures under which meetings are conducted makes it easier for newcomers to participate.

7. Always leave time for people to have their say. That may be why they come in the first place. It can be done formally, with ten minutes on the agenda for "free speech," or informally, by providing a discussion period following each topic.

## THE START-UP MEETING

A school parent advisory council is an organized group of people chosen by parents who reside in the school's attendance area. The start-up meeting is where and when the parent advisory council is created. It is at this meeting that parents select some of their members to make up the school parent advisory council.

It is wise to have some preliminary ideas about the preferred size and make up of your council. Your district parent advisory council may have some suggestions about this. An initial membership of six to ten might be good, with parents representing each of the grades served by Title I activities. For instance, if your Title I activities serve grades four, five and six you might want to aim for a starting membership of nine parents, three for each grade.

As parents arrive at the meeting, welcome them and ask them to sign in indicating their children's grades. The sign-in sheet can serve as a list of parents present, by grade level. Thus, when the time comes to recruit members for your new parent advisory council, you will know precisely who your best prospects are for specific positions.

With this approach, identifying candidates for initial parent advisory council membership can be done in a very direct way. Now you do not have to ask the general question, "How many of you are willing to be members of the parent advisory council?" Instead, you can be more direct: "We need three members whose

children are in the fourth grade."

An effective alternative is to divide the meeting into grade-level groups and let each group select its own representatives for parent advisory council membership. If you choose to organize by grade-level representation, consider having a few at-large positions - members who do not represent any particular grade level. Such positions allow you to broaden your membership. There may be people, not necessarily parents of children served by the program, who can make a real contribution to your group. However, the final make-up of your parent advisory council might not be determined until later when the bylaws are adopted.

## GETTING ORGANIZED AS A TEAM

At the start-up meeting, your school parent advisory council was formed. Now you can get to work. Your next get-together will be the first meeting of your fledgling parent advisory council. This is when you start on the three major tasks of determining the what and how of your parent advisory council, selecting interim officers (if this has not already been done) and developing the council's bylaws. Let's look further at each of these points.

Structure You have the foundation of an organization with your initial members. Now you must decide what its final form should be. A number of different questions need answers.

> Should there be a limited membership - for instance, three parents per grade level served plus three at-large members? Or should it be less formal with all parents of Title I children considered members? How should meetings be conducted, and who should be invited? What relationship is there between your school parent advisory council and the district council? Do you send one, two or more representatives? What activities do you want to engage in, and what should be the schedule for accomplishing them? How much do you want to learn about Title I? About the local Title I program? About school district policies and the decision-making process? What do you want to do? Get involved in direct classroom support? Program evaluation? Project design? Who do you work with in the school?

No handbook can answer such questions for you. They are basic to the formation of any advisory council, and the answers to them must reflect the interests and desires of its members.

Officers Federal and state regulations assert that the chairperson and other officers must be elected by and from the voting membership. Since your parent advisory council has just met for the first time, it might be too early to choose permanent officers. Instead, an acting chairperson may be

selected. Also, appoint a nominating committee. The former can keep things going while the latter talks to members and draws up a slate of candidates.

It should be noted that your bylaws will specify, among other things, what officers the group is to have, their responsibilities and terms of office and how they are to be elected. Even though bylaws are not yet drawn up, there probably will be general agreement on what officers the parent advisory council should have. Therefore, the nominating committee can begin identifying candidates.

Bylaws: Your group's first task force should be appointed to draft a set of bylaws. The job sounds more difficult than it really is. Most organizations have them, and the basic format is the same for any group. The important consideration is whether or not your bylaws describe the sort of organization you want to have. A parent advisory council's bylaws should do several things:

1. State the council's name and purpose.

2. Specify the conditions of membership - who may belong, their rights and responsibilities, how they are to be selected and terms of membership.

3. Define the officers, their responsibilities and terms of office.

4. Authorize formation of committees and establish rules for their operation.

5. Present rules governing the conduct of meetings.

6. Outline procedures by which to amend the bylaws.

## MOVING AHEAD

Your second meeting will pick up where the first left off. The bylaws committee will present its proposals. After discussions and a few inevitable alterations, you will adopt the bylaws and your parent advisory council will then have a formal existence. The nominating committee will present its slate of candidates for office and elections may be held.

It may be that your initial membership is less than you desire. You may need other parents for positions not filled at the start-up meeting. The bylaws may call for at-large positions which were not identified earlier or for representatives of community organizations. If so, you might postpone election of officers until membership is complete. A task force can be appointed to recruit new members and elections delayed until the following meeting.

## UNDER WAY

Now that you have the parent advisory council organized, your question is, "Where do we go from here?" Minimum requirements for a parent advisory council are few and can be satisfied with four meetings a year totaling not over a half-dozen hours. Chances are, though, that you will not be satisfied being little more than a "rubber-stamp." Few parents will be willing to go through the motions of forming an advisory council just to satisfy legal requirements. Clearly, you want to engage in activities that justify the effort it took to organize your parent advisory council.

The district parent advisory council is responsible for advising the district about the Title I program and for reviewing and commenting on the grant application.

The school parent advisory council should consider the necessity, desirability and impact of project operations in its school. At the same time, it represents parents in the attendance area and presents their views and opinions to the district council. The district council may make additional demands of school parent advisory councils such as requiring that delegates attend a certain number of district parent advisory council meetings.

The important point to remember is that your parent advisory council can and should equip itself to serve the interests of its members. Your council's underlying purpose is to insure that members know enough about the Title I program to make recommendations about its operation.

Within the context that there are a few things you must do, and a variety of things you want to do, what is the best approach to planning a series of activities?

## BASIC APPROACH

Start with the basic goals. (You can add more goals later as you see fit.) By and large, your school parent advisory council can satisfy its requirements by holding at least four meetings during the year.

1. A meeting in the fall to review the past year's Title I accomplishments and become familiar with current program activities.
2. A winter session to work out the school council's recommendations to the district parent advisory council.
3. A spring meeting to review progress of the program.
4. A meeting at a later date to review and discuss the application for the coming year's program.

## PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to fulfill your advisory role - to make recommendations about the future program - you, next, will want to know how well the project has done so far. Therefore, in midyear, you ought to schedule a meeting to consider the project's achievement to date and to formulate your council's recommendations for the following year's program.

The best source for a summary of program achievement is likely to be your school's Title I teacher. The general question your council should ask is, "What has the project accomplished?" You will want to explore a number of specific questions.

1. How many students have been served?

2. Have project objectives been met?

3. What gains have students experienced? Have they made significant strides toward grade-level?

4. Are students narrowing the gap between where they were and where they should be, or are they just holding their own?

5. Are the gains being made by just a few students, with little or none by the others, or are most Title I students making good progress?

Based on the answers to these and related questions, as well as your group's assessment of other unmet needs, you will be able to formulate recommendations which your school's delegates can carry to the district parent advisory council. By the same token, if you are not satisfied with the answers to these questions, you are not likely to recommend that the program continue unchanged.

## ORIENTATION-TRAINING

Federal regulations require school districts to provide parent advisory councils with sufficient orientation and training materials to allow them to do their jobs effectively. Regulations further permit use of Title I funds for training of parent council members and for reimbursement of certain expenses incurred in carrying out council responsibilities.

Regulations adopted by the state require that school districts provide a program of training and technical assistance for parent advisory council members.

It is only through training as an organized activity that parent advisory council members can learn about Title I and

their project, as well as their rights and responsibilities.

Training may be conducted by school district staff, department of education personnel, consultants or experienced parent advisory council members. It should result in your parent council playing a strong advisory role in the planning and evaluation of your Title I project. Finally, a well-organized program will lead to a closer working relationship among parent advisory council members, Title I parents and the school district.

## WAYS AND MEANS

As one of its first activities, your parent advisory council chairperson and the Title I coordinator should plan an information and training program for the year. Specific areas of project organization can be covered following a general orientation in the fall.

Your training program should begin with a basic information workshop in early fall. This orientation to tell the Title I story to parent advisory council members, parents and school district staff, should include

- An overview of Title I highlighting the major federal and state rules and regulations
- An introduction to your school district's Title I project, with a review of the approved application and staff explanations of actual operations
- A summary of parent involvement and the role of parent advisory councils as defined by federal and state guidelines
- A consideration of parent involvement at the local level, including a review of your parent advisory council's history, past activities and accomplishments.

After the fall orientation, the balance of the year's training schedule depends on a number of things - how well your parent advisory council is organized, what project activities are of interest to your members and what sort of problems have begun to show up.

If your parent advisory council is just getting organized, for instance, some early training in recruiting for membership might be helpful. Another possibility is an early session dealing with parent advisory council management.

If your parent advisory council is already formed, members may want to take up specific project activities, such as needs assessment or monitoring. The important thing to remember, though, is that training in such subjects should be organized in response to your members' interests, not for the sake of training alone. It might seem that a well-organized and active parent advisory council need not bother

with a training schedule. But new people, with fresh interests and ideas, will point the way to new directions and approaches for the parent advisory council to explore. For example, you might choose to experiment with forms of organization and leadership, or you might want to improve communication between members and district personnel. The need for training is continuous, regardless of how long or how well your parent advisory council has been functioning. The questions to be asked in setting up your training schedule are what training do we want and need and when shall we have it? The study of this handbook should be helpful in answering most of these questions. A few words about how your parent advisory council training sessions may be conducted might help. There are many ways you can go - single speakers, team trainers, small group discussions, role-playing, classroom visits and combinations of the above. Whatever approach you choose, always encourage your fellow members to ask questions and express personal concerns.

Active participation of all parent advisory council members is important. Well-organized training sessions will endure their continuing interest and involvement. Several resources are available to support your parent advisory council training activities.

1. School District - The Title I coordinator and staff should be your principle training resource. The district is required to provide copies of regulations and a description of your district's project. Since it also provides in-service training for Title I teachers and aides, parent advisory council members might attend some of these sessions to learn about procedures and methods.

2. Regional Office of Compensatory Education - The U. S. Office of Education's Regional Office staff is available as resource persons to help plan and conduct workshops for your own parent advisory council or jointly with neighboring councils.

3. The Georgia Department of Education, Title I, ESEA staff occasionally conducts Title I conferences for teachers, parents and administrators. They also hold technical assistance workshops to guide district staff in planning and developing projects and in preparing Title I applications. Your parent advisory council should be informed of such sessions and make an effort to attend.

4. Consultants - There are a number of qualified persons and organizations competent in communication and leadership training, in design and development of Title I projects and in parent advisory council requirements and procedures. They can help you plan and conduct orientation and skill development workshops.

5. Experienced Parent Advisory Council members - Veteran members are an important resource because they can orient newcomers to the district's Title I project which is a part of the local parent advisory council life.

6. Other District Parent Advisory councils - You might invite councils from neighboring districts to cooperate in conducting joint workshops for parents and district personnel.

7. Visual Aids - Film strips, slide shows and other materials have been prepared to assist parent advisory councils in self-training. They should be available through the U. S. Office of Education's Regional Office of Compensatory Education or your school district.

8. Title I Funds - Training costs are a proper expense under the regulations and can be provided for in the district's Title I budget. Training-related costs such as transportation and babysitting can be reimbursed, as can consultant fees for technical assistance. Wise use of such funds will enable parent advisory council representatives to attend workshops and training sessions in various locations, as well as in their own districts. It will help you to attract, train and hold interested and informed parents.

Example One A group of parent advisory councils in neighboring districts held a joint training program for members and district personnel. The program consisted of (1) a basic orientation workshop in early fall and (2) a January workshop focusing on needs assessment and project design. This enabled each parent advisory council to more actively participate in planning the following year's project. Title I project coordinators from the participating districts conducted the sessions.

Example Two This council determined that its members needed a series of six training sessions to be held as a part of their regularly scheduled monthly meetings. The topics included basic Title I regulations, organizational structure, target school selection, project monitoring, project design and evaluation. Sessions were run by resource personnel from another school district assisted by the parent advisory council chairperson and the Title I coordinator.

Example Three This parent advisory council held three half-day workshops during the school year on (1) basic orientation and parent advisory council organization, (2) project evaluation and monitoring and (3) needs assessment and project design. The Title I project coordinator and the parent advisory council chairperson conducted the

orientation session while consultants were employed for the latter two workshops.

## LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR PARENT COUNCILS

Leadership training should include a study of the basic requirements of Title I, both federal and state, an indepth view of local Title I projects and organizational structure and an idea of what is involved in council operations.

Since one of the primary goals of parental involvement is a closer working relationship between parents and educators, planners should involve teachers and local school district agency staff members in some of the training sessions. This will give council members an opportunity to meet some of the officials they will be working with and also provide for an exchange of ideas. Although outside consultants may be needed, the local school district should make use of all local resources, including teachers, school board members, target area parents already involved in the school program, other community members and assistance from the state department of education. Training is a continuing process. It should continue as long as the council exists. As new members join, the council should help provide information necessary to help the school and the local school district plan and operate programs that will most effectively help students.

## TRAINING FOR THE DISTRICT-WIDE PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Training for the district-wide parent advisory council should include, but not be limited to, the following.

1. Data on the local school district as a system (structure and organization of the school system, selection and recruitment standards for school personnel and school budget)
2. The decision-making process in the school system
3. The local community as viewed socially and economically
4. The purpose and history of Title I in the district
5. Past project applications and their evaluations
6. Current project applications
7. How to plan jointly for future programs
8. Citizen involvement in other programs such as, for example, Head Start
9. Self awareness and its effect on the student's education, and sensitivity to the problems of the disadvantaged (for parents as well as educators)
10. Establishment of plans for visits to schools and classrooms.

Each school parent advisory council and district-wide parent advisory council should work with the staff representative(s) to plan an in-service schedule to cover the areas mentioned above.

The planning of all training sessions should consider the participants. Parent advisory councils must choose the best time and place for the members. For instance, if a school atmosphere hinders open discussion schedule a session where parents may feel more comfortable. It is also advisable to consider this in holding regular meetings.

## TRAINING FOR THE INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

In the individual school parent advisory council, training should include, but not be limited to, the following.

1. How students and schools are identified as eligible Title I recipients
2. The number of eligible students to receive Title I services in the participating schools of the district
3. How students' needs are identified and put in priority order
4. How alternate approaches to meeting students' needs are developed
5. Type and number of personnel needed
6. Facilities, supplies and materials available and needed
7. Budget requirements for the program
8. The laws and regulations, federal, state and local, which affect the program
9. Data concerning needs of students in their schools
10. Description of the planning process, including the time schedule
11. Self awareness and its effect on the student's education and sensitivity to the problems of the disadvantaged (for parents as well as educators)
12. Establishment of plans for visits to schools and classrooms.

## CHILD-CENTERED ACTIVITIES

Many parents will want to center their activity around personal involvement in the school's Title I project. It may be easier to maintain membership and attendance in your group by concentrating on matters of immediate interest to members, rather than on the more distant involvement of policy and planning. There are several ways to serve the personal interests of your parent advisory council members.

At School Classroom visits, both on an organized and individual basis, should be a regular part of any council schedule. Every parent advisory council member and Title I parent should be encouraged to observe the project and talk to the staff. In this way, children see that their parents are interested in them, teachers are encouraged and parents gain more knowledge of the project. At times, it is possible to hold parent advisory council meetings in the classroom to acquaint members, at first hand, with what goes on in Title I classes. Demonstrations of program materials and equipment

are a good way to help council members understand the program. Classroom demonstrations featuring Title I youngsters are a proven way to stimulate parent attendance.

As your group becomes more informed about the project, opportunities for organized parent advisory council involvement may become apparent. Is there a need to tutor youngsters on a one-to-one basis during the day? Could the teacher use assistance in preparing learning materials? Does the project need additional equipment or teaching tools that cannot be supplied within the present year's budget?

In response to such questions, your parent advisory council might consider taking on one or more projects to support your Title I program. Work with the staff to set up a classroom volunteer program in which parents, senior citizens or older students spend one or more hours a week in the classroom working with students or assisting the teacher. Organize a support services pool to provide rides or baby-sitting for other parents who volunteer in the classroom, assist the staff on Title I field trips and visit other parents and encourage their active involvement. Devote some time making educational games and other learning aids for use in the classroom.

At Home There are, of course, many parents who cannot become heavily involved in school activities outside of the home. However, parents spend time with their children every day and a great deal of education occurs at home. Why not use the school parent advisory council to help parents get involved without being obligated to frequently leaving the home?

Sponsor one or more special training sessions for parents who have children in the program. Invite the Title I teacher to describe her work in the classroom and explain how parents can encourage and help their children at home. Here again, parents can be shown how to make materials or to use things already in the home to reinforce what their children are doing at school.

Some school parent advisory councils also devote time at each regular meeting to a discussion of what parents can do at home and find that, for many parents, it is the most popular part of the meeting.

At Meetings All parents have questions, concerns and problems about their children's education, behavior or general development. Many people have the same interests, but have no way to share them. Although some issues may be only indirectly related to Title I, your parent advisory council could concern itself with them if other organizations are not already doing so.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Needs assessment is a procedure which results in a description of the nature and extent of problems students face in their studies.

A consideration of all available relevant information, from within and outside school, will indicate the number of students who are eligible for Title I services. It will focus on needs in basic academic skills and on the need for other services that contribute to success in those areas.

Federal requirements mandate that

1. Each school district must identify all educational needs of all "educationally deprived" children - those who are achieving below their age level.

2. Needs assessment should identify the total number of students who are eligible for Title I services and describe the nature and extent of their problems.

3. The needs assessment must focus on problems affecting student progress in the area of basic skills, (e.g., reading, mathematics or language arts).

4. The needs assessment must look at students in the following categories.

   - preschool
   - elementary and secondary
   - dropouts
   - children in institutions
   - non-English speaking
   - private schools
   - handicapped

5. Objective educational data has to be used, but the assessment also may include social and cultural information.

6. There must be evidence that the needs to be addressed were chosen on the basis of highest local priority.

7. Special educational needs of private school children must be described in the project application with reference to specific standards.

8. Members of the school and district parent advisory councils must have access to the district's needs assessment data and to descriptions of related programs in order to recommend which unmet needs should be served.

In order to do a complete needs assessment, the district must bring together information from many sources. Some will be within the school itself, such as standard tests and teacher

observations. Data sources outside the school might also be used, including welfare statistics, health department findings and neighborhood or parent surveys. Confidentiality of children's individual test scores, welfare records and health conditions, etc. must be maintained.

Your parent advisory council can help decide what kinds of data should be included in needs assessment and how it is to be gathered. To that end, a task force can be formed to work with the district staff. The task force will want to ask a number of questions.

1. Is there a particular student group whose special needs should be considered? For example, have the needs of preschool children ever been surveyed? Or dropouts? Or private school students?

2. Is there a new source of information about student needs that should be used? As one approach, might a particular community agency have data available that suggests the need for other types of assistance?

3. Is there an organized procedure within the district for the collection of data on student basic skills needs? For instance, does the district have a formal standardized testing program, or is there a systematic process of gathering such information from classroom teachers?

Your parent advisory council might choose to help in the actual collection of need assessment information, either inside or outside the school. Parents are well suited to interview other parents about what their children need. This kind of survey can be very useful since some people can be an important source of information about how their children respond to different subjects in school. They can often suggest the "why" of low test scores, thus helping clarify needs contributing to underachievement.

Once all possible needs assessment data have been collected, you should have a complete picture of the total number of students whose achievement is below grade level. There are always too few Title I funds to serve all children who might need help. Thus, it is necessary for your parent advisory council and the school district to establish priorities, on the basis of need, among basic skill areas, grade levels, and individual schools.

Example One In the late fall, one parent advisory council spent one meeting discussing the district's needs assessment with project staff. The staff reviewed information from previous years and described the current and future plans for identifying student needs. A spring meeting concentrated on discussion and analysis of data which had been gathered. At the end of the second meeting, interested parents formed a task force to expand the parent advisory council's role in the planning and carrying out of the following year's needs assessment.

Example Two Another district organized a task force to review various needs assessment data and procedures. With the assistance of the U. S. Office of Education's Regional Office of Compensatory Education, task force members studied needs assessments of other districts. Based on this study, the task force and project staff jointly recommended a new approach to a district-wide needs assessment.

## FINANCING PARENT COUNCILS

Title I money may be spent for parent council activities to insure the smooth functioning of the group and to avoid undue hardships that would otherwise be felt by members of the council if their expenses were not paid. Any expenditure of Title I funds must be included in an approved budget and proper documentation must be available to support each expenditure.

Examples of items which may be paid from Title I funds include registration fees for workshops and conferences and the cost of providing meeting facilities, equipment, and supplies. Title I funds may also be used to pay for certain expenses incurred by parent advisory council members while they are involved in council activities. Such expenses could include transportation costs to and from council meetings or to officially-sponsored workshops, baby-sitting fees while members are attending parent advisory council meetings and expenses in connection with visits by council members to Title I schools.

Reimbursement for loss of work to attend meetings is not an allowable expenditure from Title I funds.

## HANDLING GRIEVANCES

Occasionally, parent advisory councils may be called upon to help with complaints by parents whose children are in the Title I program. The following steps should be followed.

1. The parents (complainant) should make a written report of the complaint, including initial efforts made to resolve the problems. They should provide the parent advisory council member contacted with a copy of this report.

2. The written report is brought to the attention of the council. The council will make, with adequate time provided on the regular agenda for the discussion of the complaint, immediate recommendations for assignment to an appropriate committee for investigation.

3. The council will make, if necessary, in its opinion, a

recommendation for the disposition of the complaint. The council may determine that

a. the complaint was unfounded.
b. the matter has been resolved within the existing regulations and that no further remedy is available.
c. the matter is not within its jurisdiction as an advisory council.
d. the school district has made the necessary changes and is in the process of amending the cause for the complaint.

The council will report to the complainant on its findings and make a recommendation for appropriate action.

## PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING A MEETING

There are eight steps to be taken in holding a meeting which the chairperson should follow.

1. Call the meeting to order.
2. Hear the minutes of the previous meeting.
3. Hear reports of officers, boards and standing committees.
4. Hear reports of special committees.
5. Hear announcements.
6. Go on with the unfinished business of the last meeting.
7. Go on to new business.
8. End meeting and adjourn.

How to Make a Motion A proposal for action is made in the form of a motion. For the council to consider the motion, at least two members must be in favor of it. The first member makes the motion, and the second member seconds the motion to show his/her approval.

This is how a motion is made.

1. Stand and address the chairperson -- "Mr. (Ms.) Chairperson." Wait until you are recognized by the chairperson. Do not speak until you are recognized by a nod or by name.
2. Be sure you have your motion clearly in mind and worded as briefly as possible.
3. When you have been recognized, state the motion so that all can hear. "I move that . . . "

4. After the motion has been made, another member, without waiting to be recognized, calls out, "I second the motion."

5. The motion having been made and seconded, the chairperson repeats the motion by saying: "It has been moved and seconded that . . . "

6. When the chairperson has stated the motion, it is said to be pending. It may now be considered by the council - that is, it is open to discussion and debate.

7. Any member may now rise to agree or disagree with the proposal.

8. The chairperson inquires, "Is there any further discussion?" If none, the chairperson asks, "Are you ready for the question?" The members call out, "Question!" The response, "Question," is a parliamentary form which shows that the members are ready to vote.

9. The chairperson then announces the vote: "The Ayes have it. The motion is carried." Or, "The No's have it. The motion is defeated."

How to Conduct Elections In the constitution and bylaws of your council, there are probably definite directions for election of officers. The following methods have been found to be effective.

Nominations by Committee Some months before the election date, the president or chairperson may appoint a nominating committee. The committee's purpose is to present to the group a slate of nominees - a list of candidates - for the various offices. Names for the list may be suggested to the committee by any member. When called for, the committee chairperson presents the report by saying, "Mr. (Ms.) Chairperson, the nominating committee wishes to present the following slate . . . "

The presentation of the slate does not mean election. The council members have the right to make additions to the slate. If there are none, the chairperson puts the question, "All those in favor of the submitted slate say, 'Aye'." Then: "The officers have been duly elected."

Nominations from the Floor This method of nominating is less formal. It is used in many small councils. The chairperson informs the members that nominations are in order as follows: "Nominations are in order for the office of . . . " A member rises, is recognized and states, "Mr. (Ms.) Chairperson, I nominate . . . for . . . " Then the chairperson responds by stating that "Mr. (Ms.) . . . has been nominated for . . . Are there further nominations for this office?" Members may continue to nominate for this office. When the chairperson feels that all members have had enough time, he/she inquires, "Are there any objections

to closing the nominations for . . . ? There being none, the nominations are closed."

The same procedure is used for the nomination of the other officers. Nominations need not be seconded, but they do not hold unless they are accepted by the nominee. If he/she declines the nomination, his/her name must be withdrawn.

## EVALUATING PARENT COUNCILS

Since the parent advisory council is a new activity in most school districts, it is important that its success, or lack of success, be evaluated after each full year of operation. This evaluation should involve school officials, council members and other parents and community members. The effectiveness of the parent advisory council should be tested against predetermined goals. What was it meant to accomplish? Did it succeed? How much of a voice did council members have in planning the Title I projects, the assessment of the needs of eligible students, and the actual operation of the project? How effective was the council in promoting involvement of other parents in the school system? What has been the community response to the council?

Where weaknesses are noted, evaluators should attempt to pinpoint the cause. Did the council receive adequate support from the local educational agency? Were council members committed to the concept of parental involvement? Did the council seek help when needed? Did school officials listen to the suggestions and comments of the council? Did parent members take an active part in council proceedings?

Such an evaluation will enable the council, assisted by the local school district, to change its procedures or to request additional help.